

2017 BUDGET & POLICY PRIORITIES

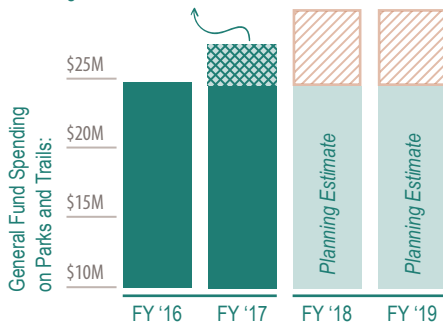
- Fully Fund Minnesota State Parks and Trails
- No New Taxes for State Trail Users
- Keep State Parks Free from the Noise and Undue Artificiality of OHVs



OPERATIONS BUDGET: FULLY FUND MINNESOTA STATE PARKS AND TRAILS

Minnesota State Parks and Trails are still recovering from drastic budget cuts they suffered in the late 2000s and early 2010s. Funding has rebounded in recent years, but much of that success has depended on temporary, one-time fixes to avoid staff layoffs and service cutbacks. The FY 2018-19 budget gives Minnesota a choice: Do we let the one-time budget fixes expire, leading to service reductions across Minnesota State Parks and Trails? Do we continue to tread water by including last year's one-time funds in the base budget, keeping services at the current levels which aren't meeting expectations? Or do we finally use a small fraction of the statewide budget surplus to fully fund State Parks and Trails? Gov. Dayton has recommended the latter choice, and we are too.

We avoided cutbacks last year thanks to a temporary funding solution. Now those funds are at risk.



WHICH PATH FORWARD FOR PARKS & TRAILS? It's an easy choice.

<p>BUDGET CUT? \$24.4 MILLION PER YEAR</p> <p><i>The baseline planning budget would cut current State Parks and Trails funding by \$3 million per year. If this happens, park and trail services will be reduced.</i></p>	<p>STATUS QUO? \$27.4 MILLION PER YEAR</p> <p><i>Legislators could choose to make the one-time funds appropriated in FY 2017 a part of base funding. This would avoid major cutbacks, but still leaves Parks and Trails stretched to a critical point, operating below expected levels.</i></p>	<p>FULL FUNDING? \$31 MILLION PER YEAR</p> <p><i>After years of chronic underfunding, is this the year Parks and Trails finally get the funding they need? A General Fund appropriation of \$31 million per year would make past one-time fixes permanent, cover increasing costs, fund new park units, and expand services at Minnesota's most-visited parks and trails. Gov. Dayton's budget meets these needs.</i></p>
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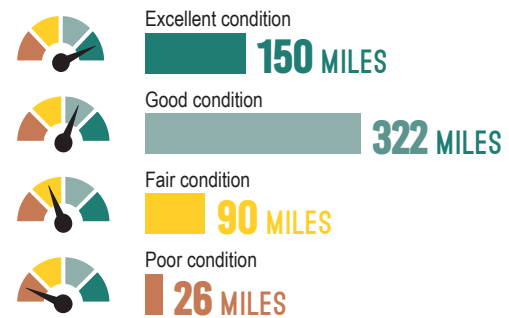


TRAILS POLICY: NO NEW TAXES FOR STATE TRAIL USERS

Charging a new fee to bike or hike on Minnesota's state trails doesn't make sense. For starters, such a policy would discourage beneficial activities (trails spur spending in Minnesota communities and promote healthy lifestyles). Such a tax would also be difficult, intrusive, and expensive to enforce. And finally, Minnesotans already agreed to pay increased taxes for parks and trails when they passed the Legacy Amendment in 2008. Revenues from the Legacy Amendment have been put to all types of good uses, including rehabilitating some of our state trails. In fact, a forthcoming study found state trails are in relatively good shape. While there are still trails needing repair, a new fee on biking and hiking is a bad and unneeded policy.

THE STATE OF OUR TRAILS:

Based on forthcoming study by Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota





PARKS POLICY:

KEEP STATE PARKS FREE FROM THE NOISE AND UNDUE ARTIFICIALITY OF OHVs

State Parks are special places that were created to protect our state's "unspoiled natural resources" for future generations. Parks & Trails Council opposes all efforts to introduce OHV recreation (Off-Highway Vehicles, including All-Terrain Vehicles, Off-Road Vehicles, and Off-Highway Motorcycles) into Minnesota State Parks. The introduction of OHVs into State Parks would be a change to current state policy that would compromise the State Park mission. Not only would the expansion of OHVs into State Parks violate state rules (MN 6100.1900), it also would violate the Outdoor Recreation Act. In addition, surveys conducted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources show this is an issue most state park visitors oppose.

WHY THIS IS SO IMPORTANT:



OUTDOOR RECREATION ACT (M.S. 86A, SUBD. 2)

“ [Only] Outdoor recreation activities... that can be accommodated **without material disturbance of the natural features of the park or the introduction of undue artificiality** into the natural scene may be permitted...

...[State] Park use shall be primarily for aesthetic, cultural, and educational purposes, and **shall not be designed to accommodate all forms or unlimited volumes** of recreational use.

VISITORS WANT QUIET, NATURAL STATE PARKS

72% ...of visitors say the **smells and sounds of nature** are "very important" for their visit.

60% ...of visitors oppose allowing OHVs in state parks. Only 12% support the idea.

57% ...of visitors say **silence and quiet** is "very important" for their visit.

PROTECTING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

“ The effects of OHV activities on ecosystems are **diverse and potentially profound**... Studies have revealed a variety of effects on soil properties, watersheds, and vegetation resulting from one to multiple passes by OHV vehicles.

~ U.S. Geological Survey

OHVs ALREADY HAVE DISPROPORTIONATE ACCESS TO STATE LANDS

5%
of Minnesotans own an OHV

≈ 3,966,000 ACRES
of State Forest land open to OHVs

30%
of Minnesotans visit State Parks

≈ 214,000 ACRES
of State Park land to enjoy



Expanding OHV opportunities doesn't need to come at the expense of State Parks



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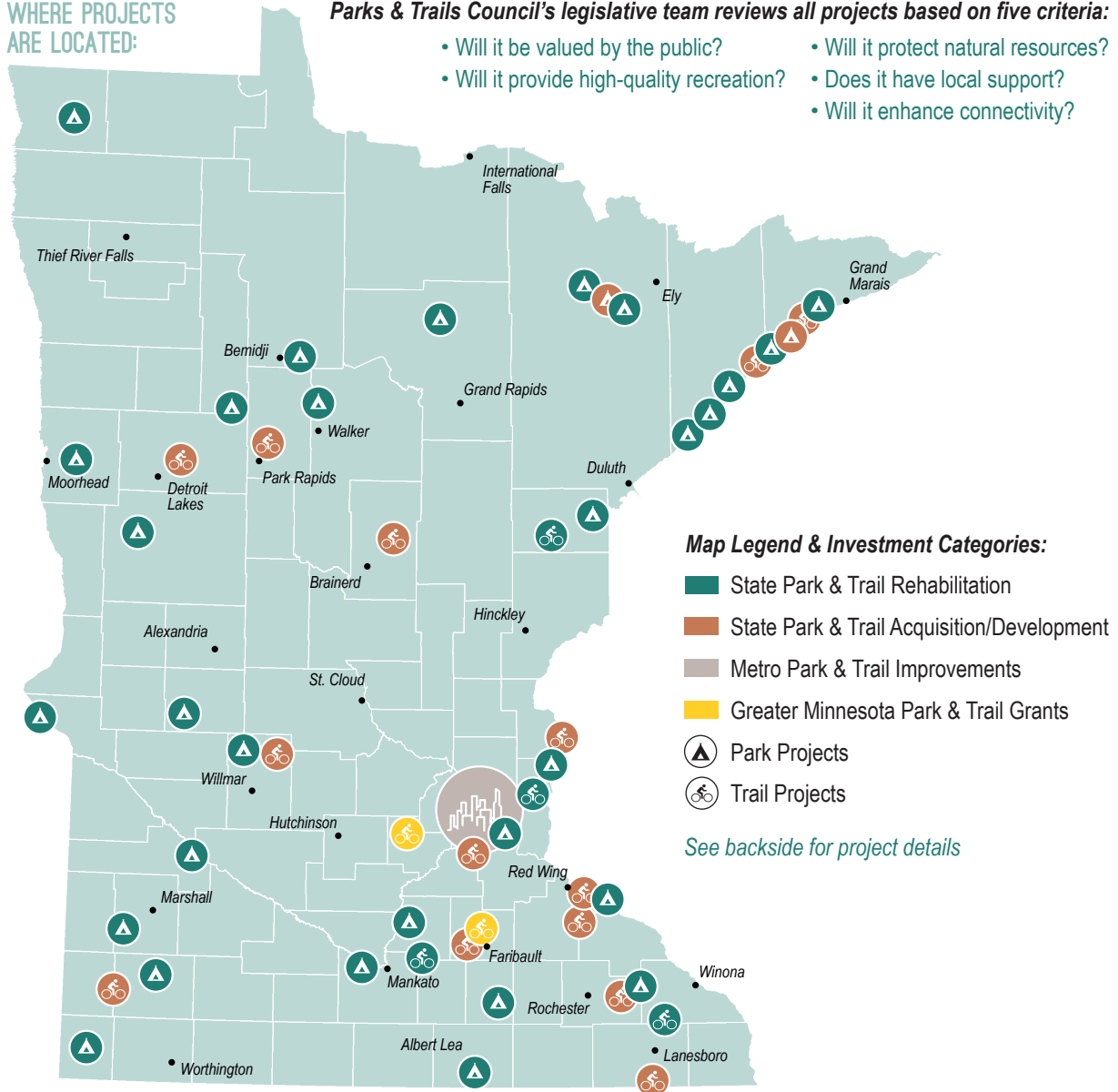
2017 CAPITAL INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Minnesota's parks and trails have substantial unmet capital investment needs. Working with park agencies and local friends groups, **Parks & Trails Council has identified over \$100 million worth of park and trail projects ready for funding.** All of these projects have been in the works for years, and were put on hold following the failure to pass a bonding bill in 2016. Projects include grant programs for Greater Minnesota's regional parks and trails, rehabilitating historic state park structures, repairing park roads, replacing campground sewer systems, acquiring park in-holdings, building new trails and repaving existing ones, restoring native prairies, and renovating historic Itasca State Park.

WHERE PROJECTS ARE LOCATED:

Parks & Trails Council's legislative team reviews all projects based on five criteria:

- Will it be valued by the public?
- Will it provide high-quality recreation?
- Will it protect natural resources?
- Does it have local support?
- Will it enhance connectivity?



The breakdown of our recommended projects by investment category:



2017 BONDING PROJECT LIST

(in \$1,000s)

STATE PARKS AND TRAILS REHABILITATION & RENEWAL \$57,500

State Park & Trail Renewal \$40,000

To fund preservation needs across the state park and trail system, including renewing historic structures, rehabilitating trails and water access points, addressing health and safety concerns, and ensuring facilities are ADA accessible.

Itasca State Park Renovation \$10,000

To fund renovation needs at Minnesota's oldest state park. Projects include renovation of visitor facilities, bike trail realignment, erosion control, reforestation, and water and sewer rehabilitation.

State Park Campground Renovations \$7,000

To complete renovation of campgrounds in state parks, including replacing shower and toilet buildings, addressing safety and code issues, upgrading electrical systems, and repaving campground roads where needed.

Prairie Restorations \$500

To restore 500 acres or prairie in state parks and along state trails.

STATE PARKS AND TRAILS ACQUISITION & DEVELOPMENT \$31,215

State Park, Recreation Area, and Trail Development \$10,000

Casey Jones State Trail \$1,250

Chester Woods State Trail \$2,250

Gitchi-Gami State Trail \$3,130

Glacial Lakes State Trail \$2,585

Goodhue Pioneer State Trail \$1,300

Heartland State Trail (Frazee Segment) \$3,500

Heartland State Trail (Itasca Spur) \$350

Interstate State Park/Swedish Immigrant Trail Connection \$2,200

Mill Towns State Trail \$650

Minnesota Valley State Trail \$1,500

Mississippi Blufflands State Trail \$1,000

Preston-Harmony State Trail \$1,500

METROPOLITAN REGIONAL PARKS & TRAILS \$11,000

To improve and expand the Metropolitan Regional Park & Trail System through acquisition, development, and rehabilitation projects. This request would be matched by \$7.33 million of non-state funds.

GREATER MINNESOTA PARKS & TRAILS \$6,610

Local & Regional Grant Programs \$5,000

To provide competitive grants to local governments for acquisition and development of local and regional parks across Greater Minnesota.

Dakota Rail Trail \$900

Faribault Northern Links Trail \$710



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2017 REGIONAL PRIORITIES



MINNESOTA'S REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS: SUPPORT CLOSE-TO-HOME OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL MINNESOTANS



GREATER MINNESOTA REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS COMMISSION

Parks & Trails Council supports the recommendations of the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission. This recommendation funds 12 important park and trail projects across Greater Minnesota, and includes approximately \$400,000 to support the Commission's administrative and planning responsibilities.



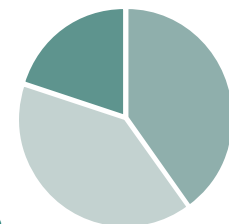
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Parks & Trails Council supports Gov. Dayton's budget recommendation of \$2.87 million general funds for Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails. This appropriations matches past appropriations, and helps each of the 10 implementing metropolitan park agencies maintain and operate their regional parks and trails.



PARKS AND TRAILS LEGACY FUND: EQUITABLE SPLIT OF 40%-40%-20% ACROSS MINNESOTA'S PARK AND TRAIL SYSTEMS

Parks & Trails Council supports the concept of equity, coordination and balance between the needs and priorities of Minnesota State Parks and Trails, Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails, and Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails. In 2011 the Legislature created a working group to recommend a funding distribution for the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund; that work group recommended a 40%-40%-20% split between the three systems through the 2018-19 biennium. Parks & Trails Council supports the work group's consensus recommendation.



40% STATE PARKS AND TRAILS

40% METRO PARKS AND TRAILS

20% GREATER MINNESOTA PARKS AND TRAILS

